UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/695
18 June 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 15 JUNE 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to draw your urgent attention to the incidents caused by the intrusion of North Korean ships into the territorial waters off the west coast of the Republic of Korea. Since 7 June 1999, North Korean fishing boats and naval vessels have repeatedly crossed over the Northern Limit Line (NLL), which has been recognized by both sides of Korea as a practical separation line off the east and west coasts of the Korean peninsula since the end of the Korean War in 1953. The NLL was reaffirmed by the two sides of Korea in the South-North Basic Agreement concluded in 1992.

In a clear defiance of repeated urges over the past week by my Government for their immediate withdrawal to prevent unwarranted escalation, North Korea has continued to send its ships and naval vessels to the coastal area across the NLL. On 15 June 1999 at around 9.25 a.m., local time, at about 2 kilometres south of the NLL, a North Korean naval ship opened fire against our naval vessels, which had been deployed to counter the North's intrusion. Our naval vessels, having exercised maximum restraint thus far, had no choice but to fire back in self-defence.

Today, my Government strongly protested to the North against its violation of the NLL and the unprovoked use of force by its naval ships against our vessels. We also made it clear that the North's acts of military provocation are intolerable and will be met with appropriate countermeasures.

The Government of the Republic of Korea strongly urges the North Korean authorities once again to immediately cease all acts of violation of the NLL and military provocation against the Republic of Korea. We further call upon the North to resolve this incident peacefully through dialogue, and to respond positively to our engagement policy in the interest of reducing the tension on the Korean peninsula and promoting reconciliation between the two sides of Korea.

I would be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) LEE See-young
Permanent Representative

99-18093 (E) 180699